

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
7 November 1985

Lover jilted Vitaly

His old flame saw him as traitor

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WASHINGTON—The final blow in Soviet spymaster Vitaly Yurchenko's unhappy three months as a defector apparently came when he learned that his love of many years, the wife of a Soviet diplomat in Canada, viewed him not as a hero for going to the CIA, but as a traitor.

Yurchenko, said to be winging his way back to Moscow last night after deciding he made a mistake defecting in Rome last August, first met the woman while assigned to Washington in the late 1970s. He was trying to get the CIA to bring her to Washington.

But she reportedly told him that she loved him as a KGB man, not as a defector.

The man who once headed all KGB activities in North America was also scared, according to several accounts. Yurchenko found that his name was becoming virtually a household word.

Many worries

The whole world seemed to know which Soviet spies he had turned in to the CIA and what American spies he may have punished while working for the KGB. He worried about legal suits,

about his physical safety—the CIA could not even protect the most basic secrets—and even about the fact that his CIA handlers did not speak anything but English to him in the months that he was under virtual house arrest in a rural home south of Washington.

There also was a new fear. CIA Director William Casey, who as a hands-on director actively participates in cases, was said to have flown to London recently to meet with Oleg Gordievski, the Soviet diplomat who was the KGB's chief spy in Britain. Gordievski had really been a double agent working for the British for 15 years.

It was said that Gordievski raised some doubts in Casey's mind about Yurchenko, who up to then had been considered an absolutely reliable source. Yurchenko may have



Vitaly Yurchenko

been aware that the CIA was starting to have doubts about him.

Clearly, life in America wasn't going as planned. So last Saturday night, Yurchenko had dinner with his CIA handlers at an intimate French restaurant, Au Pied de Cochon, in Georgetown. The restaurant also was only two miles from the Soviet diplomatic compound.

Yurchenko excused himself and walked out of the restaurant. By the time his CIA handlers discovered he wasn't hanging around for dessert, all they could do was pay the check.